

Testimony for SB 411

4/8/15

Chairman

Members of the Committee

For the record, my name is Ken Brown. I am Director of Specialized Services for Opportunity Resources, Inc. (ORI) in Missoula. We are one of the largest provider of services in Montana, serving 560 individuals in employment, residential and transportation services, and 800 individuals in case management services. None of those clients are the same as the clients at MDC. None of them are a danger to themselves or others.

This is my 42<sup>nd</sup> year of employment in MT disabilities services; having worked 5 years at the Montana Developmental Center (MDC) in the mid-70's, for the Developmental Disabilities Program –leaving as a Bureau Chief and now 25 years in community based services for ORI. I am also one of only two Developmental Disabilities Professional Persons that are involved in the commitment process to MDC, a role that I have been involved also for about 25 years.

I am concerned about SB 411 for the following reasons:

- **The timelines are too short.** Evaluation of existing MDC clients, the Transition Planning Committee, REP, potential building, and writing a new waiver are all occurring at the same time. Implementation to start by 1/1/16 and MDC to be closed by 6/30/17. It is very likely that these timelines will not be met and the fiscal note therefore is not correct. The expenses for MDC can not be decreased as stated.
- **Community based providers' staff wages are too low** to be able to hire staff for current clients, even with proposed staff wages increased funded by the legislature. Community based services are presently chronically understaffed and under paid. It will be equally hard to hire staff for people coming out of MDC. You would be robbing Peter to pay Paul.
- **The present rate system needs to be redone.** It is broken. The billing system is too difficult, which demands staffs' valuable time being spent on billing and not providing services.
- I am very **concerned about putting clients in prison.** This is not appropriate and will most likely lead to persons with disabilities being harmed and lead to costly law suits.
- I am concerned about the possibility of **putting people out of the streets** like mental health deinstitutionalization did or **having people shipped to out of state facilities**, like Alaska is doing.

Please, slow this process down. Do it right, for the sake of all the people involved.

Sincerely,



Ken Brown

Director of Services

Developmental Disabilities Professional Person